

Serial No. 10/661,579
Amendment Dated: February 19, 2008
Reply to Office Action Mailed: November 16, 2007
Attorney Docket No. 056207.51363C1

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Figs. 1, 5, 6 and 24.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

In response to the rejection of Claims 9, 10, 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraphs. Applicants have amended those claims so as to be consistent with the original disclosure and to eliminate an apparent misspelling. In particular, Fig. 24 shows the claimed warming system, which figure is described at paragraphs [0095] – [0099] as well as [0081] – [0083].

Similarly, Figs. 1, 5, 6 and 24 have been corrected to refer to “adsorption” rather than “absorption” so as to be consistent with the original disclosure.

Accordingly, reconsideration of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 is now respectfully requested. Inasmuch as Claims 13 and 14 have not been rejected over the prior art, Applicants presume that these claims should not be indicated as allowable.

The rejections of Claim 9 as being anticipated by Mori et al. under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and of Claim 10 as being obvious over Mori et al. under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are traversed, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Mori et al. approach to purifying desorbed HC is one that is completely different from that of the present invention. The Office Action references in part col. 8, lines 36-44 of the Mori et al. patent in support of its

conclusion that the prior art taught control at the time of engine start by alternating the rich and lean states until the three-way catalyst has reached its activating temperature. Applicants see no such basis for this conclusion in the referenced portion of the Mori et al. patent. The same appears to be true with regard to col. 7, lines 7 *et seq* of the Mori et al. patent in that it does not suggest the approach taken by the Applicants here.

More specifically, the Mori et al. approach was to arrange a three-way catalyst close to a connected portion of plural exhaust pipes and an HC adsorption catalyst downstream of and close to that three-way catalyst. With the HC adsorption catalyst arranged downstream of the catalyst, the three-way catalyst temperature increases prior to the HC adsorption catalyst. What occurs based on the description at col. 7, line 14 *et seq* of Mori et al. is that the HC desorbed from the HC adsorption catalyst is blown back to the three-way catalyst and purified therein (as seen in Fig. 22). The backflow phenomenon occurs in the region of the connected portion of plural exhaust pipes.

Applicants' approach to purification avoids such a problem altogether by using a catalyst in which the HC adsorption function can act at less than 100° C, while the three-way function can act at about more than 250 °C. Thereby, when an engine is started, the HC-adsorbing catalyst adsorbs HC exhausted from the engine until its temperature rises to 100° C after which the HC adsorption

catalyst starts to desorb HC. But the purification is not performed yet. When the temperature of the HC adsorption catalyst rises up to and above 250 °C, the HC-purifying function or the three-way function is activated and thus the desorbed HC is purified. No such approach is even hinted at in the Mori et al. patent.

Accordingly, early and favorable action with respect to Claims 9 and 10, as well as aforementioned Claims 13 and 14, is earnestly solicited.

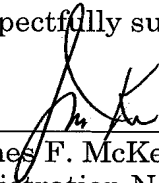
If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and

please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit
Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #056207.51363C1).

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Respectfully submitted,



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